

Will Society Forgive and Welcome Clarence Mackay's Divorced Wife?

Quite Unusual Moral and Social Problems Which Confront Fashionable Society with the Return of Dr. Joseph A. Blake and His Wife from Their Exile in France



Clarence H. Mackay.



The Latest Photograph of the Divorced Mrs. Mackay, Who Is Now the Wife of Dr. Blake.

DR. JOSEPH A. BLAKE, one of the foremost surgeons in New York, invaded the home of Mr. Clarence H. Mackay, the multi-millionaire capitalist—and the scandal drove Dr. Blake and Mrs. Mackay out of New York and out of the United States.

Mr. Mackay arranged a divorce. Mrs. Blake, with much bitterness, cast off her distinguished husband. Then the disgraced pair ran away to Paris and were married. This was six years ago.

Now it is announced that they are coming back to New York to live. And fashionable society is busying itself with two very interesting questions:

Will society forgive and welcome the woman?

Will prudent husbands trust a doctor in their homes who betrayed a friend and patient?

Dr. Blake and his wife have done splendid work during the war, and this is urged as a reason why they should be forgiven. But it is also pointed out that thousands of other men and women have been equally earnest war workers and that Dr. Blake's betrayal was unethical and peculiarly unforgivable and that society must not put its stamp of approval on a doctor who cannot be trusted in your home.

It is definitely announced that the famous surgeon, with his wife and their two young children, will return to America this year permanently. They will spend the Summer at the fashionable Newport colony and after that will look for a home in New York, where the doctor will endeavor to resume his great surgical practice and his wife perhaps her social and other activities.

Many curious problems of the same kind have come up before, and New York society has usually been liberal in its treatment of those who possessed wealth and social gifts.

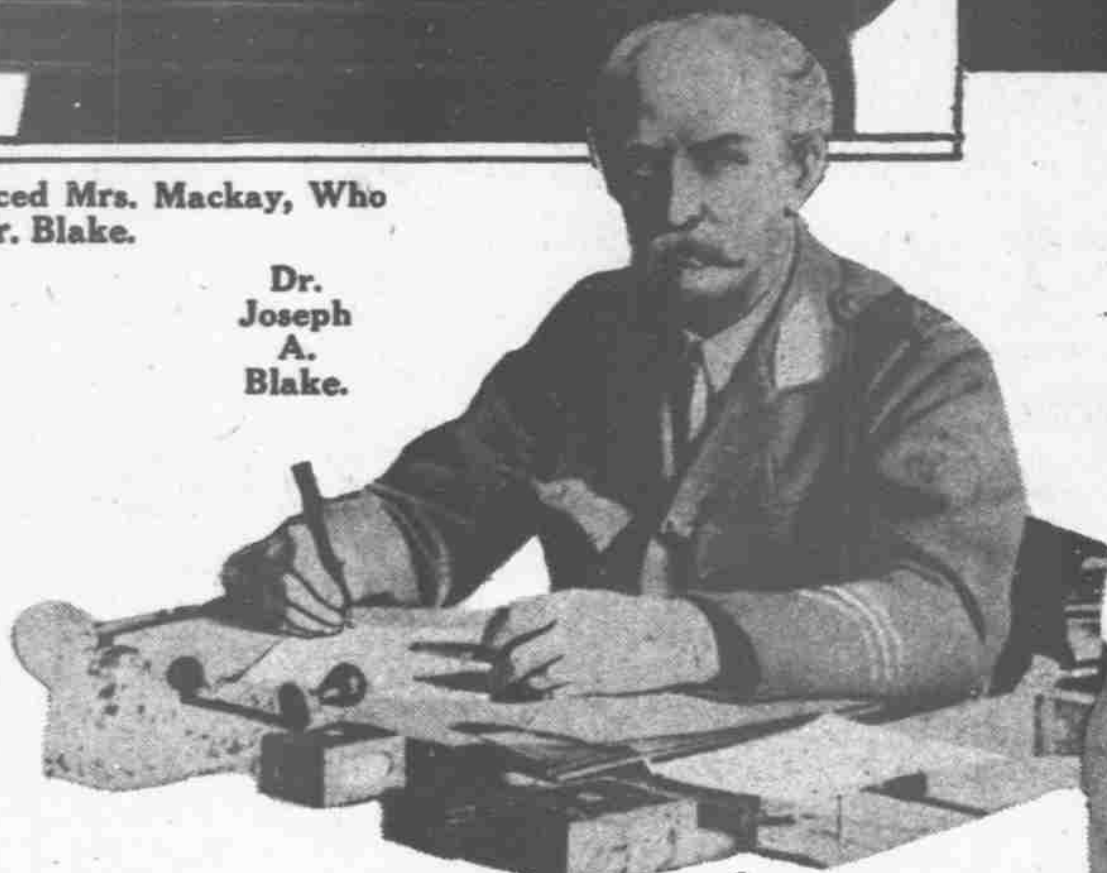
But never before, perhaps, did society have to consider so flagrant a violation of the conventions as in this case. Dr. Blake, a surgeon enjoying peculiarly confidential relations with many persons, won the affections of the wife of a friend. While doing this he abandoned a faithful and estimable wife, who had borne him two promising children.

His affinity, Mrs. Mackay, already the mother of three children, parted from a husband who had become quite noted for his devotion and princely generosity to her. Her cause is made all the more remarkable by her intelligence, her pretensions to political leadership and her well-known interest in various kinds of public work, both philanthropic and political.

How will society judge the conduct of such a man as Dr. Blake, both in its private and its professional aspects? Can wealthy husbands of young and charming wives consider him a trustworthy man to safeguard the health of their wives or their daughters? Can dignified matrons, who feel a sense of responsibility for the tone of society, treat Dr. Blake as a man to be received into specially confidential relations?

The question of the treatment of Mrs. Blake is not less puzzling. How shall responsible men and women receive a woman who left an excellent husband who enjoys the highest esteem of society, and three lovely children without any discoverable excuse?

The social position of Clarence Mackay is one of the many factors that complicate the situation. Few men of such wealth enjoy more general popularity in the social world than he does.



Dr. Joseph A. Blake.

It was universally admitted that when the shocking trouble with his wife and Dr. Blake arose he was a model of chivalry, generosity and kindness. Moreover, he has gained much popularity by his liberality to the opera and to various sports and charities in which he is interested.

On the other hand there are many serious things to be considered in favor of a hearty welcome to Dr. and Mrs. Blake to America. There is probably no single individual who has done more to relieve the sufferings of American and Allied soldiers during the great war than Dr. Blake. From the first outbreak of the great struggle he threw himself with all his soul into the work of helping wounded soldiers.

He established three great hospitals, two of which he was running at one time. He performed many wonders of surgery. In his labors for the soldiers he was ably assisted by the former Mrs. Mackay. She collected most of the funds for the hospitals and afterward directed the nursing staffs. She was extremely popular with the soldiers of all countries.

There is no doubt that the great war services of Dr. Blake constitute a genuine claim to the consideration of humanity. Are they so great that society should pardon his violations of the domestic code? Shall it decide that the world agony has swept aside conventions and made service to humanity the first factor in social worth?

Shall society take a more limited view and say, "We will honor and employ the surgeon but we cannot welcome the private citizen to our homes?"

With regard to Mrs. Blake the two sides of the question are perhaps not quite so evenly balanced, for it can hardly be claimed that she has rendered unsurpassed services to mankind, but the problem is nevertheless a complicated one.

In the first place her original social position in New York was much higher than that of any of the other persons concerned. From the New York point of view it was for instance much higher than that of Clarence Mackay.

These facts have considerable importance in assuring some social support for Mrs. Blake. She has undoubtedly powerful friends in society who will support her through the most delicate situations. One of these friends is the Duchess of Marlborough, at whose almost historic wedding Mrs. Blake was a bridesmaid.

The Duchess will spend the Summer at Newport herself, and that is virtually an assurance that she will aid Mrs. Blake to take a foremost social place. Is the Duchess's influence so great that she can outweigh any puritanical elements in our fashionable society?

Then Mrs. Blake's personal attractions must not be left out of the account. Her beauty, charm, wit, energy and vitality make her a distinguished figure in any company where she may be. Of proved ability as a writer, a novelist and political leader, she is a character who rises intellectually considerably above the level of our representative fashionable gatherings.

A score of matters are pointed to as complicating the projected appearance of the Blakes in society. Mrs. Blake's oldest daughter, Miss Katherine Mackay, who by the way is the image of her mother, made her debut in society this year. She lives with her father, but is on excellent terms with her mother. The chivalrous father will be under the necessity of absenting himself whenever his daughter meets her mother.

The return of Dr. and Mrs. Blake to America is as much a surprise as their original love affair. We have been accustomed to frivolous conduct on the part of mere butterflies, but when a leading surgeon and a noted surgeon placed their personal indulgence above the more serious things, it was something of a shock to the most sophisticated.

It was in 1898 that Clarence Mackay, the only surviving son of John W. Mackay, married the beautiful Miss Kitty Duer. Immediately after the marriage everybody learned that this was a union of great wealth with brains and beauty. Mrs. Mackay gave his bride every luxury that she could imagine and money could purchase. Under her artistic guidance he built Harbor Hill, near Roslyn, L. I., a mansion that with its surrounding grounds is said to have cost \$6,000,000. It was a Louis XIII. chateau, a rare architectural type.

Mrs. Mackay became known as a forceful equal suffrage leader and a gifted author, writing "The Stone of Destiny" and other works.

Gossip linked the names of Mrs. Mackay and Dr. Blake as early as the Summer of 1911, when she had a house near Litchfield, Conn., where Dr. Blake and the then Mrs. Blake also had a home.

Dr. Blake was quite friendly with Mr. Mackay and paid the latter a long visit at the delightful shooting lodge which he maintains in Scotland.

When the scandal was first being discussed Dr. Blake's neglected wife gave this pathetic interview which throbbled with her own heart tremblings as she tried to

face the situation as a brave and loyal wife:

"Dr. Blake is the best man God ever made," she said with earnestness. "I lived with him for twenty-one years and I should know. He is a man of the highest ideals. No woman ever had a more devoted husband."

"Dr. Blake is a New Haven man. He came to New York a stranger to the leaders of his profession. He inherited a wonderful intellect, and he worked hard. He succeeded on absolute merit."

"Not only in technique, but in science, he became the greatest surgeon in New York. Yes, why shouldn't I say the whole truth? He became the greatest surgeon in the world. He had all the world at his feet."

"I have known him all my life. His great achievements, his devotion to me and to our dear boys made me so happy. Then this thing—this terrible thing—happened. I cannot stand it. It is killing me, these things they are saying about the man I love, the best man God ever made."

"I cannot say more. I have never said one word reflecting on him. He is my husband. He is the greatest man God ever made, and the best. Say that for me, won't you? Say that I said it. He is my husband."

Finding that the rumors and gossip were indeed no longer to be doubted Mrs. Blake instituted a damage suit against Mrs. Mackay under her maiden name, Mrs. D. Ketchum Blake.

As a result of the suit Dr. Blake was constrained to leave New York and to resign his post as chief surgeon of the Presbyterian Hospital and as professor at the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He went hurriedly to Europe and stopped for a time in Edinburgh, Scotland, but eventually passed on to Paris.

After considerable delay and many mysterious conferences between the lawyers concerned, Mrs. D. Ketchum Blake's suit against Mrs. Mackay was withdrawn.

Two of the Mackay Children.

On the Right, Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay, in Tiara and Jewels, as the Wife of the Mr. Mackay and Mistress of the \$6,000,000 Home He Built for Her.

Then Mrs. Mackay took a residence in Portland, Maine, with the object of obtaining a divorce, which it was supposed the good-natured Mr. Mackay would permit but she abandoned this plan and left Portland.

Then Mrs. Mackay moved over to Paris and early in 1914 obtained a novel divorce for an American. In order to obtain it she qualified as a resident of France. Frederic R. Couderc, who represented Mr. Mackay, gave this explanation of the affair:

"The French court granted a mutual divorce to Mr. and Mrs. Mackay in an action brought by Mrs. Mackay on the ground of desertion. Mr. Mackay having interposed a counter claim on the same ground."

A New York lawyer remarked that the Paris divorce would henceforth be the most distinguished affair of its kind, quite outclassing Reno. A few months later Mrs. Ketchum Blake obtained a complete divorce from her husband. She explained that she had only consented to this course to secure the future of her younger son. Within twenty-four hours of this divorce Dr. Blake and Mrs. Mackay were married in Paris. It was then November 29, 1914, and the war had been raging nearly four months. From the very start of the con-

flict Dr. Blake had been head of the American Red Cross Hospital at Neuilly near Paris. Mrs. Mackay was associated with him in Red Cross work.

Dr. Blake was in haste to be married, but a new batch of wounded awaited his attention. It was 2:30 in the afternoon before he could finish his work. Then he washed his hands, leapt into an automobile, picked up Mrs. Mackay in Paris and sped to the local French official's office, where the simple marriage ceremony was performed. Then he jumped into the car again and returned to his surgical labors at Neuilly with the same speed.